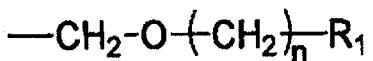


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. **(Currently amended)** A polymer compound comprising:
an alkali soluble group (i), wherein
at least one hydrogen atom of the alkali soluble group (i) is substituted by an acid
dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group (ii) represented by a general formula (1):



(1)

(wherein R₁ represents a cycloaliphatic group which contains at least one hydrophilic group and no more than 20 carbon atoms and may contain an oxygen atom, a nitrogen atom, a sulfur atom, or a halogen atom, and n represents 0 or an integer of 1 to 5), wherein the cycloaliphatic group contains an adamantane backbone, and wherein

the polymer compound exhibits changed alkali solubility under the action of an acid.

2. **(Previously presented)** A polymer compound according to claim 1, wherein the alkali soluble group (i) is at least one selected from the group consisting of an alcoholic hydroxyl group, a phenolic hydroxyl group, and a carboxyl group.

3. **(Original)** A polymer compound according to claim 2, wherein a carbon atom adjacent to the carbon atom bonded to the alcoholic hydroxyl group is bonded to at least one fluorine atom.

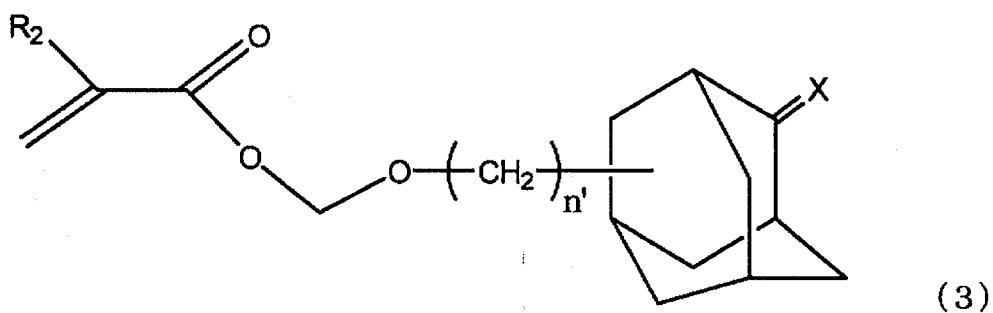
4. **(Canceled)**

5. **(Canceled)**

6. (Currently amended) A polymer compound according to claim [[5]] 1, wherein the hydrophilic group is at least one selected from the group consisting of a carbonyl group, an ester group, an alcoholic hydroxyl group, ether, an imino group, and an amino group.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously presented) A compound represented by a general formula (3):



(wherein R₂ represents a hydrogen atom, a fluorine atom, a lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or a fluorinated lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, X represents two hydrogen atoms or an oxygen atom, and n' represents 0 or 1.).

9. (Canceled)

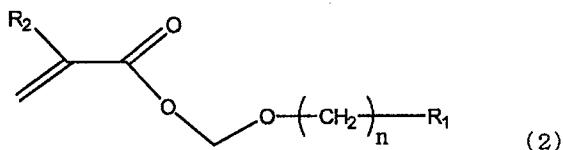
10. (Previously presented) A polymer compound comprising a structural unit (a1) derived from the compound according to claim 8.

11. (Previously presented) A polymer compound according to claim 10, further comprising a structural unit (a3) derived from (meth)acrylate containing a lactone-containing monocyclic or polycyclic group.

12. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 11, wherein the structural unit (a3) comprises at least two mutually different structural units derived from (meth)acrylate containing a lactone-containing monocyclic or polycyclic group.

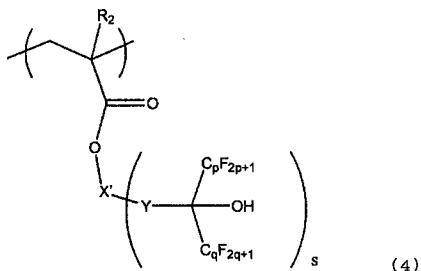
13. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 11, further comprising a structural unit (a4) derived from (meth)acrylate containing a polar group-containing polycyclic group.

14. (Previously presented) A polymer compound comprising a structural unit (1) derived from a compound represented by a general formula (2):



(wherein R_1 represents a cycloaliphatic group which contains no more than 20 carbon atoms and may contain an oxygen atom, a nitrogen atom, a sulfur atom, or a halogen atom; n represents 0 or an integer of 1 to 5; and R_2 represents a hydrogen atom, a fluorine atom, a lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or a fluorinated lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms), and

a structural unit (a6) represented by a general formula (4):



(wherein R_2 represents a hydrogen atom, a fluorine atom, a lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or a fluorinated lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20

carbon atoms, X' represents a divalent or trivalent cyclic group, Y represents an alkylene or alkyleneoxy group containing 1 to 6 carbon atoms which is divalent, p and q independently represent an integer of 1 to 5, and s represents an integer of 1 or 2[[.]]).

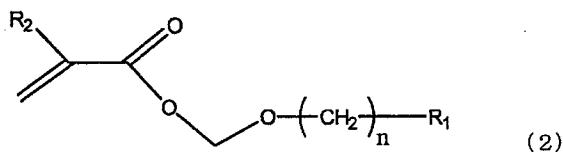
15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

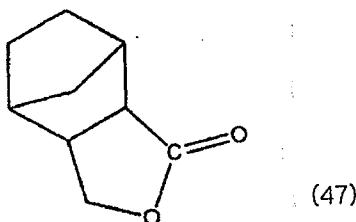
19. (Previously presented) A polymer compound comprising a structural unit (a1) derived from the compound represented by a general formula (2):



(wherein R₁ represents a cycloaliphatic group which contains no more than 20 carbon atoms and may contain an oxygen atom, a nitrogen atom, a sulfur atom, or a halogen atom; n represents 0 or an integer of 1 to 5; and R₂ represents a hydrogen atom, a fluorine atom, a lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or a fluorinated lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms.), and

a structural unit (a3) derived from (meth)acrylate containing a lactone-containing monocyclic or polycyclic group, wherein

the structural unit (a3) comprises (meth)acrylate containing a lactone-containing monocyclic group and (meth)acrylate containing a lactone-containing polycyclic group represented by a following structural formula (47).

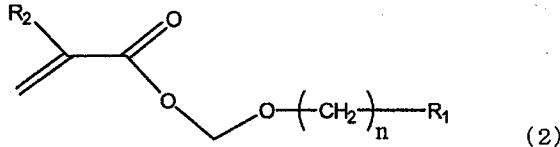


20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously presented) A photoresist composition comprising:

a base material resin component (A) which exhibits changed alkali solubility under the action of an acid; and an acid generator component (B) which generates the acid on exposure to radiation, wherein the base material resin component (A) is a polymer compound comprising:

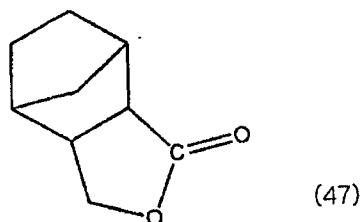
a structural unit (al) derived from the compound represented by a general formula (2):



(wherein R_1 represents a cycloaliphatic group which contains no more than 20 carbon atoms and may contain an oxygen atom, a nitrogen atom, a sulfur atom, or a halogen atom; n represents 0 or an integer of 1 to 5; and R_2 represents a hydrogen atom, a fluorine atom, a lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or a fluorinated lower alkyl group containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms.), and

a structural unit (a3) derived from (meth)acrylate containing a lactone-containing monocyclic or polycyclic group, wherein

the structural unit (a3) comprises (meth)acrylate containing a lactone-containing monocyclic group and (meth)acrylate containing a lactone-containing polycyclic group represented by a following structural formula (47).



22. (Currently amended) A resist pattern formation method comprising:

- forming a photoresist film on a substrate using the photoresist composition according to claim 20 or 21;
- exposing the photoresist film; and developing the exposed photoresist film to form a resist pattern.